

Harris Creek Baptist Church
Jonathan Pokluda
Series: 7 Deadly Sins of Suburbia
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Apathy

Hebrews 5:11-14

“11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”

Morning church! If you are willing to, you know, press in, and close any empty seats between you. If can do that, that will help. I know we're out of space or close to out of space for those in the lobby as well. Thank you, guys, for sitting out there and we are grateful. I know that that's probably not what you had planned.

If we haven't met JP, Jonathan Pokluda. It is just a privilege to get to dive into God’s word with you this morning. On my 30th birthday, I had a kidney stone and so went to the hospital. As I was there, they did a CT scan - where they basically look at your insides. I don't know how that magic works, but they do it. Then afterwards, I met with the doctor to process what they saw. And so, I went in this room. I'm sitting in the room waiting for the doctor to come in. Assuming that we're going to talk about kidney stones and kidneys and bladders, and all that fun stuff. They come in the room and said, “Hey, let's talk about your health.” Absolutely. My health; kidney stones for sure. They hurt. He said, “No, you're overweight.” And I was like, “Well, you know I didn't go calling you names. You know?” I'm like what does that mean. I don't feel overweight. “Why, why would you say this?” He is like, “Well, it's more on the inside. You have a fatty liver.” I'm like fatty liver? Is that a medical term? Is that proper? You learned that in med school? That feels like a fourth-grade insult on the playground. You know you have a fatty liver... Your mom... Whatever. I'm like, “Really? That's where we're going with this? I got a fatty liver.” And they said, “Yeah. You're pre-diabetic. You can get diabetes.”

I'm like, “Pre-diabetic? So, what does this mean?” This means basically I'm just sitting here and there's this disease out there that's going to jump on me at some point. I'm moving toward it. I don't know when, I just got it. And right here all you can tell me is it's coming my way. You kind of give me a heads up, like you can see the future. And you're saying, “Hey, I'm going to have diabetes?” “Not exactly. You really have a choice.” “Well, if I got a choice, I choose not to have diabetes. You know, like if we're circling. Yeah, if I got a choice...” “No, no. Basically if you continue to do what you're doing, you will have diabetes. But if you change some of your habits, you most likely will avoid it. If you just kind of stay where you're at in life. You continue to eat what you eat. You continue to not exercise the way you're not exercising. Yes, you're going to

move toward having diabetes. That's going to happen. If you make some changes to your inputs and outputs, then there's a really good likelihood that you will avoid that outcome." You're at a fork in the road. You have a decision to make right now. You can determine your path.

And I start there, not because I want to talk with you about diabetes. Today's sin is not gluttony. It's apathy. And the reason that I compare apathy to diabetes is apathy is what will happen if you continue to do what you're currently doing. You're at a fork in the road. You will drift toward apathy. You will become more sucked into apathy if you just simply continue in the habits that you're in presently. But if today you determine to make some changes to your inputs and outputs, you can avoid that outcome. That's the reality that we sit in today.

I want to put a quote before you. Absolutely brilliant! It comes from D.A. Carson. D.A. Carson is probably the leading New Testament scholar of today. He has done more New Testament studies arguably than anyone. And he says this, which it is the sermon. Just hang on to every word as I read this to you. Listen.

People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord.

It doesn't naturally happen. You will not wake up tomorrow more godly, more holy, if you do nothing today. In the same way, you're not going to wake up tomorrow more fit, more toned, more muscular if you do nothing today.

We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift towards superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated. D.A. Carson

That is the sermon. You will drift toward apathy naturally. You will not naturally drift toward a more godly, disciplined, holy version of yourself. It will not happen. Which begs the question, what is God's role and what is our role? You are saved by grace through faith. It is an act of God's kindness and grace to you. His Holy Spirit is sanctifying you - also a work of grace, but not devoid of your responsibility. You have a role to play in that. That you are to discipline yourself for godliness. Discipline means you cannot do what you feel like doing and grow godly. For you to grow godly, you will have to do things you don't want to do. Uncomfortable things. Things that stretch you. Things that don't feel right. So, like when reading the Bible and you say, "Oh it doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't make sense. It's hard." So, you just push it aside. "That doesn't really work for me." You know?

Listen, working out doesn't really work for me. OK? When I do it the next day I hurt. I'm sore like something I'm allergic to evidently, right. You know, I don't enjoy it. You cannot make decisions in life based on what do I feel like doing. That will not give you a more godly, spiritual, holy version of yourself.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 says this, **“train yourself to be godly,”** or your version might say **“discipline yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things. Holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”** More than you watch how you eat or what you eat, or how you work out, or how you care for your physical health... Even more than that, make sure that you discipline yourself for godliness.

After I left the hospital, I went home to see my parents because my great uncle had passed away. I was visiting them, and I asked Mom, “How did he die? What caused his death?” And she said, “Oh, he had diabetes.” I was like, “Oh gosh, diabetes can kill you? He died from that thing, that I'm about to get, evidently? She's like, “Yeah, it's dangerous. It's serious.” See, I think we think of apathy as this cuddly fluffy struggle. “Oh yeah, just a little apathetic. This seasons busy. It is just kind of a season, man there is lots of stuff going on. Not really reading the Word. Communities got to take second place. Life Group is hard. Hey guys, you just got understand it's summertime or it's this season or here's where we're at...” And we don't realize that it will kill you and destroy your faith. That you will get to the end of your life and look back and realize 'I did nothing of eternal significance. My life was impotent of the power of God. I have nothing to show for. No reward stored up in eternity that I can enjoy with Jesus forever and ever and ever and ever. I've completely wasted my faith, or I never really had one.' And I don't know. It is not for me to decide today. Maybe some self-reflection?

So, I want you to live the Christian life. There's so many of us not living the Christian life. We are simply slowly dying. There's so many of us not living the Christian life, we are just simply slowly dying. So, we're looking at the 7 Deadly Sins of Suburbia. We talked Week 1 about where this idea comes from - the 7 Deadly Sins. There was this monk that kind of brought out different scriptures and then Saint Thomas of Aquinas made it famous. We've taken that list and we've applied them to what we see in our surroundings today. In Week 1, we talked about busyness - Jesus, Mary, and Martha. How Mary chose what was better by growing in her relationship with Jesus and not focused on the busyness of the things to do in life. Then last week we talked about entitlement. How we cannot be grateful for something that we feel entitled to. That there are all these things that we feel we have a right to that are actually a distraction from us deepening our relationship with Jesus.

Today, I want to talk about apathy, of the spiritual kind. Spiritual apathy. Apathy, we can learn a lot from the etymology of this word. It starts with the letter A, which is ‘not/without’. That is what that means. Pathy comes from pathos, which is suffering or passion. So, the word apathy means ‘without suffering’. Like I want to go through life and avoid difficulty, hardship, at all costs. I'm like an AI experiment - I'm choosing the path of least resistance at every turn. If it's hard to share my faith and easy not to, I choose not to. If it's difficult to read the Bible and easier not to, I choose not to. If it's hard too fast and easy not to, I choose not to. You just kind of navigate life this way. It's difficult to be generous, but simple not to. I choose not to. And it's why you are surrounded by weak Christians. Churchgoers. It's how we got here. It's how we got here.

Often our suffering forges our passions. Our passions are shaped through suffering. This is why people come back from war and long to go back there. They want to sit in their platoon again and experience that brotherhood or sisterhood that they had there. Because they went through such a

unique shared experience of suffering together. This is what strengthened the church in the 1st century. It wasn't the comfort. It wasn't the laser, the lights, the smoke machine, the comfortable chairs, or the central air and heat. It was the running for your life. We just lost another one. That's how the message made it to you. And so, as we move through, I'm going to be in Hebrews 5, if you want to turn there.

As I move through Hebrews 5, we will be in verses 11-14 primarily. I'll jump over to Hebrews 6 for a bit. How do you fight diabetes? Diet and exercise. You fight diabetes with diet and exercise. You fight apathy, complacency, with diet and exercise. What are you feasting on and how are you exercising your faith? So, as we move through Hebrews 5, we're going to look at how we fight apathy by growing as a healthy disciple; we fight apathy by a steady diet of God's word; and we fight apathy by exercising our faith.

Interesting thing about Hebrews, we don't know who wrote it. Scholars disagree. A dear friend of mine believes Apollos wrote it. I disagree with her; I believe Paul wrote it. Many disagree with me. I may say Paul accidentally today. Just know if I do, we don't know who authored Hebrews other than the Holy Spirit using some person. Right? And we do know why it was written and to whom. It was written to Jewish-Christians who were tempted to return to the tradition that they grew up in. Now this is so important for us because one of the things that holds us back is we begin to compare church or Christianity to what we experienced in our upbringing. Never considering, more times than not, that our upbringing might have been flawed. Parts of it may have been a complete and total disgrace to God, unbiblical even. And I'm not saying we throw it all out, there are parts of it that are good. Most likely for all of us, parts of it that were good and parts of it that were bad. And we have to discern as we look into this book, what of our upbringing was biblically informed and of God and is consistent with the scriptures? And what of it was of humans, that was added to tradition that we just hold on to. That's what they're struggling with.

Let's go, verse 11. **“We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.”** So, there's clearly a transition happening here. When he says, “much to say about this”, he's talking about Jesus as the high priest in the order of Melchizedek. I can't go into that a lot, but I would just say that's what he's talking about. Jesus as the high priest, the one and only mediator. And when he says, “much to say about it”, he really comes back to it in chapter 10 and spends about three chapters on it. So, he's not lying. He has a lot to say about it, and he says this, **“In fact, though, by...”** So, he pauses for this admonishment that I think is apt today - poignant today. **“In fact, though, by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”** He's passionate. **“Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”** They trained themselves for godliness.

So, he starts this section by giving us a goal, you should grow into a teacher. At first, you're being fed and then you're feeding others. Here's how 2 Timothy 2:2 says it, **“And the things you**

have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” This is the Christian progression! You come into the faith, saved by grace through faith. You grow as a disciple. A distinctive of being a disciple is that you begin to pour into others, who then pour into others, who then pour into others, who then pour into others. If you have not seen this, you have not experienced Christianity! Make no mistake about it, that is the Christian process. Anything else is counterfeit to the Christian process.

1. We fight apathy by growing as a disciple.

That is to say, a disciple maker. Because when we talked about discipleship, we said that this idea of a disciple who makes disciples is redundant. Like a lime tree that makes limes. The only kind of disciples there are, are the kinds that make disciples. That's what discipleship is! That's what it is. This is the picture that he's painting. It is the Christian MLM. OK? That stands for multi-level marketing or network marketing, right?

You have to be familiar with some aspect of this. If you grew up in the 80s or early 90s, it was Amway. You bought from Amway, and you got a discount. It was like the OG Amazon, you sold through Amway. Today it's, you know, Arbonne, Monae, Plexus, Beautycounter. Right? Herbalife. Right? These are things that you benefit from first. You are like, “Wow, I bought into this, and it had a tremendous impact on me.” Then you use your testimony to offer it to others and as you do that, you become an expert on the topic. You never knew that you are going to be an expert on, you know health and wellness. But all of a sudden, I've become enlightened to it because it's changed my life. That's the best picture I can give you of what should happen in the church. But in reality, we get inoculated to it. We're surrounded by it. We're in it all the time, it's the air we breathe, and our lives really aren't that changed.

If you look at our life and the life of our neighbor atheist, they're really similar. We like the same things. We do the same things. We have similar interests and similar values. The difference is on Sunday I carve out this section for God where I sing songs and I read this ancient book and then I go on about my atheistic living. And so, when I sit with somebody and I'm like, “Hey, Jesus changed my life,” They are subconsciously thinking, “No, He didn't. You look just like me.” And so, we don't. That is not Christianity. It's just not Christianity. Our lives have been changed by Jesus. We grow in His word. We tell others about Jesus, and we teach them His word. Where are you in that process and how long have you been there? How long have you been there? He's fired up and he's calling people out. And he's saying you're stuck at the elementary teachings.

He expounds on this in Chapter 6, and so I'll just show you this is what he says, **“Therefore, let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.”** He says, “You guys keep going back to the fundamentals. There's all of this crossover in what you grew up in and the basics of the faith. You've never grown beyond it.” When are we going to start taking in this book and having it change us from the inside out?

See what we do today, is we go to church to be entertained. And you should never, ever go to church to be entertained! Now let me make a distinction here. I'm not saying you should never be entertained at church. Make no mistake about it, I am unapologetically going to effort to entertain you with stories and video clips and pictures that stay with you so that you would be engaged. We're going to work hard to entertain you, right? But if the reason you choose a church is because you like it, it feels good, it's fun, it's comfortable and I really enjoy it. People say these things in an effort to encourage, not realizing that we're feeding this idea of consumeristic Christianity. We can't do that. We got to wake up from that. It's killing us. We're not progressing in discipleship.

Let me give you the best example of this that I can give you. It's like if you go to the gym. So, you go to the gym, and someone knows you went to the gym. They say, "Hey, how was your workout today?" And you say, "Man, it was so great! This guy got stuck under the bench press and he couldn't lift it up and so he had to do this wobble thing and he dropped the plates on the ground. It was really loud and the whole gym looked at him. I was like dying. I was going to help, but I didn't. And anyways it was hilarious. And then I went and watched a spin class..." And they are like, "You watched a spin class?" "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I watched the spin class because they're sitting there on that bike and they're just pedaling as fast they can. They stand up and they sit down, and they stand up and they sit down, and the instructor is really good! She was saying these really super motivating things. You could just tell people were given it their all. Peddling as fast as they can, sweat just pouring out. I was super entertained!

I don't really feel like it's working if I'm honest. I don't feel any changes to my body yet, but I loved going." And you would say, "Hold on, that's not why you go to the gym. You have to work out to go to the gym." This is how we think about church. We want to be entertained. And I have zero interest, I'm wasting my life... Condemnation on me if I try to build an audience and not an army of people who lock arms and say let's go push back darkness; build the Kingdom; be the light; grown in our faith and use it. Not for ourselves, but to impact the world. What's holding us back is maybe you've never in your entire life seen that. And so, when you hear church, you are like, "Oh yeah, I know church. I grew up in church." I'm like no! Not that kind of church.

Anybody ever workout with somebody who thinks they're a trainer? "I was a kinesiology major, you know." Yeah... And so, you're there and I like it man. Like hear me out that I like working out with those people, because they know what to do. They're like, "Hey, hey shoulders back. Elbows in, elbows in - good form. Keep your head straight. Keep your... Nope. Nope, you're using your back." They're just like sitting there instructing you. In a sense, this is goals. This is what it means to grow in the faith and to have an understanding of God's word. So that when someone says, "Hey, should I buy Bitcoin?" You can be like, "Well, here's what the scripture says. Let me give you a verse to think on. We can pray through that together." "Hey, should I go out with them or not?" "Well, here are some verses that inform that." "Man, how did you know those verses?" "They are just some I have meditated on day and night."

We need leaders here. Leaders of life groups. Leaders of marriage classes. Leaders of Equipped Disciple. Life group shepherds, which is the equivalent of deacons here - they shepherd Life Groups. Leaders of Re: generation. Sisterhood leaders, men's study leaders. The health of this

church depends on you progressing in discipleship. You cannot stay where you're at. We will not grow healthy as a church. We will get diabetes. Apathy.

“...you need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.” The baked in illustration here is an infant that relies on milk and remains an infant. There's a relationship between what you take in and how you grow, and he's pointing that out. What you feast on determines how you grow and what you grow into.

2. *We fight apathy with a steady diet of God's word.*

We fight apathy with a steady diet of God's word. OK? I know that there are a lot of hot takes on breastfeeding. We're going there. Nursing. I know people have really strong opinions about this and it can be a controversial topic. I'm no stranger to controversy myself, so we're going there. OK? One of the debates I've seen is, “he's too old or she's too old. How long are you going to do that?” And then this has been played out in movies and magazine covers and all kinds of things. Where you're just like, “Gosh, that child just walked up to their mom and used English and said, ‘Mom, I'm hungry’ and it got weird for some people.” So, here's a picture of Time Magazine 2012. (Magazine cover of woman and 3-year-old son standing independently next to her breastfeeding.) Very controversial. We have censored that for your benefit in church. And so, you just think, man that's awkward. I'm uncomfortable right now. Some of you are like don't make eye contact. Don't make eye contact. This is weird. It just got weird. Why did you go there? Is that shock value? Don't you understand that's where he went? That's what he's saying! OK?

But listen, here's what we can all agree. I don't know what the age is. I'm not an expert and I'm not going to give you my opinion. Save your emails. Here's what I know. Here's what I know. There is an age where all of us would say, “Oh yeah, that's too old.” Your 22-year-old coming right to you... Woah! Woah! Woah! Don't think about it, don't even let your mind go there because that's weird! You're like why would you go there, Pastor? Because the author of Hebrews went there! When he talks about milk, he's not talking about Oak Farms, Hill Country Farms, or Borden. He's saying something really in your face and controversial, very pointed. This is the point he's making. That's why I went there.

And you think it's bizarre to think about a 22-year-old nursing? Think about somebody who's been in the faith for 22 years and their diet is still the Jesus Calling. Yeah, it was great. I'm not hating on Sarah Young. That that's not the point of me saying that. You could go New Morning Mercies. Listen, I love Paul David Tripp. The dude loves Jesus. Great teachers. I'm telling you it's not enough. And lest you think I'm calling out authors, you could go Welcome to Adulthood Survival Guide and I'm telling you it's not enough. At some point you're going to have to break open the Bible, read a verse and meditate on it and journal. And get a commentary and read it several times. You're like, “But it's really hard and I don't understand it.” And that's the point. It's in the hard, the difficulty it's in the suffering that you are shaped into a disciple. That's what I'm saying. You have to grow.

But you're supposed to be the expert. You went to seminary. No, I didn't. No, I didn't. Me and most of you went to the same seminary. And every single time I tried, God said, “No - remove

their excuses. Remove their excuse.” I didn't even make good grades in Technical College, much less seminary. OK? I can barely read. (Crowd Laughs) I'm telling you, man, I'm dead serious. But as I worked, and it was toil, God, in His kindness, began to illuminate the scriptures through the power of His spirit. I'm telling you the same thing is available to you. The same thing.

Some of you are listening to this years later driving down the road, in the gym working out, and I want you to know this sermon is not enough. It's not enough to turn you into the spiritual giant that God sees you as. It's an in addition to you belonging to a church that teaches the Bible, going through life in a group of believing Christians, sharing the gospel regularly, reading and studying the Bible daily for yourself, spending time in prayer, fasting, teaching others, and serving with your gifts. You do that and you will grow. You say, “Well, that's a lot.” And I say, “Yes, it is. What else are you going to do with your time?” “Well, a lot!” “No! Those are the things... Everything else pours out of that. That's the foundation. That's the foundation. Can I tell you something? Don't get frustrated because we grow slowly. We grow slowly.” Psalm 1 says, “... **like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in and out of season...**” Have you ever taken a picture of a tree and you come back a year later and you take another picture of that same tree? It looks the same. But you take a picture of a tree and you come back ten years later, 20 years later, and you take another picture of it. It has transformed into something different. The biggest change in growth you can't even see. They're deep into the ground, holding it firmly so that when the storm comes it won't go anywhere. It yields rich life-giving fruit and it's beautiful and its branches spread along and out the real estate of the earth beneath it. It's a monster. Right? We grow slowly.

But some of you, you have planted your roots into the soil of apathy. They are one inch deep. You've been there for a long time. The fruit that you produce is rotten and not edible. And when the storm comes, when the winds come, when the troubles and the trials and the tribulations and the circumstances and the situations come your way, you're going to blow over like a broom. You have nothing holding you up. That is not the spiritual journey that God intends, that's different.

Someone this week just said... and they meant well and in context it made sense. But they just said, “We all know men of faith don't pray. We all know men of faith don't pray.” And as I thought about that, I want you to know there has never been a person of faith who doesn't pray. They've never existed. It is a contradiction in terms.

Verse 14, “**But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.**” We learn the Word of God and we live by the Word of God. Our beliefs drive our behavior. We do not focus on someone's behavior without talking about what they believe in. This is where I think the American Church has missed it so badly. We've trained people up to look like, and walk like, and dress like and act like Christians; to go where Christians go without focusing on what they actually believe. When you're by yourself, what does your relationship with God look like when no one else is looking? Because that's the strength of it. That's what it really is. When you're doing something. When you're praying in a circle, so you can sound spiritual, so that others who are listening will think, “Oh wow! She's a really good prayer. Or wow, he must be really spiritual.” That's a fake faith. It's a false faith. It's no faith at all. It's different than actual faith. But when you sit with God by yourself, so that no

one sees and nobody can tell you good job and it's you're just there to enjoy Him and to learn about Him and grow in knowledge and understanding of His word, that's a real thing. That's what faith is; that's who you are like.

So many churches today have trained people in how to dress up like Christians for Halloween. We're cleaning up the outside. That's the very people that Jesus rebuked throughout the Gospels.

3. We fight apathy by exercising our faith.

That is by actually living out our faith. We fight apathy by exercising our faith. You know that friend that—they live generously, they share the faith constantly and consistently. They don't gossip about anyone. Nothing bad comes out of their mouth, they only speak words that build others up. They love others so well and they know the Bible. Anytime you ask them a question, they have a verse for everything. In 2 Timothy it says... In 1 Corinthians it says... If we go over here to Joshua and look at Judges... You're just like, “Woah, gosh, you’ve memorized the whole Bible. Man, that's amazing!” They are just a great friend in the way they push you deeper into your relationship with Christ. What I'm saying is you can be that friend. Every one of you can be that kind of friend to others.

He says, will be trained to distinguish good from evil. You will grow in wisdom. You will know what to do in every situation. Check this out. The promise of the scripture, overcoming sin will get easier. Some of you are like, “Man, porn is eating my lunch... Drinking, gossiping. I just can't stop it. Alcohol, I'm given over to it. Nicotine, I'm stuck in it. I'm addicted to it. I can't stop it.” It's really counter intuitive. “Hey, you want to get over nicotine? Start to feast on God's word. Write it on your heart. That's different than a patch or chewing gum. But it works.”

The spirit of God comes in your life and begins to conform you to the image and the character of God, so that things not of God begin to fall off. This is what it's saying. You know how to distinguish what is right from what is wrong.

I want to be clear right here. You cannot work for your salvation. Your salvation comes to you from God through His son, Jesus Christ. He died for your sins. God raised him from the dead. He paid the price for your sins. Right? You are justified by faith, made righteous because of Christ's work. You cannot work for your salvation. You can work from your salvation for an eternal savings account. OK? You can work for eternal rewards, so that we don't enter heaven, smoky and empty handed. Having nothing to show for... “God, I'm here to enjoy forever. The good works that I did on earth in your name.” Your bank accounts empty. There's nothing there.

I have a friend whose marriage drifted toward apathy. They just got to a place where they were roommates, cohabitating under the same roof. No love, no passion. The intimacy was done, a thing of the past. In fact, in the midst of apathy adultery crept in. So now what was cohabitation really turned into hatred. I don't even like you, but I'll stay stuck in this. So, my friend is faced with three options. 1) He can end it. 2) He can exist in it. 3) He can begin to work for it.

And had he existed in it, he would have got to the end of his life and looked back and thought, “Man, I had a terrible marriage. Every minute of my marriage was just bad, and I just stayed in

it, and it wasn't good. It just kind of served as this governor, keeping me from going completely off the rails of being stuck in this thing that I don't enjoy.” And so many people would look back on their deathbed and think, “That's my relationship with Jesus. It's just this thing that is kind of keeping me from completely going off the rails, but I'm in this relationship that I really don't enjoy. I find no satisfaction in it.”

But he began to fight. He began to write notes, post-it notes, putting them on the wall, the door - anywhere she would trip over them. He began to do the dishes every single night. He just said, “That's my thing.” He began to look for chores that he could do and to serve her. He began to leave voicemails and send her text messages of scripture. “Hey, I'm praying this for you today.” He began to take her out. “Hey, can I take you out? I'm going to show up with flowers like I used to. And I'm going to begin to pursue you.” And the Lord began to soften her heart. Today they travel and actually speak to others about how to have an amazing marriage from their marriage, which was at a place worse than I've ever seen in 15 years of ministry. And it turned around.

If you do not begin to grow in your faith, one of two things is going to happen at the end of your life. 1) You're going to go to hell. You're going to wake up eternally separated from God to the realization that you were playing a game that you never really had a relationship with Him. Or 2) You're going to look back and realize that God, in His grace and mercy, saved you but you did nothing with it. You wasted it. You have nothing to show for it. You embraced a false version of Christianity.

In summary, we fight apathy by progressing in discipleship. We fight apathy by feeding our faith. And we fight apathy by exercising our faith. Let me say that again. We fight apathy by growing as a disciple. We fight apathy with a steady diet of God's Word. We fight apathy by exercising our faith.

Some of you know a little over a year ago, my Dad died. He had COVID and passed away. Just by show of hands, how many of you have had COVID? We're going to assume you don't have it right now, so it's OK. Raise your hand really high if you've had it at some point. That's like the vast majority of us. I have had it twice myself. A lot of us have had COVID, but we're all here. And some of you would say, “I was asymptomatic. No symptoms. I didn't even know I had it.” Some of you would be like, “Oh, it's like a cold. It wasn't a big deal.” Some of you are like, “Man, it was really hard.” Others of you would be like, “Felt like a sinus infection.” I've heard it all. You probably have as well. It killed my dad. His life ended. Why? He wasn't the healthiest person alive. He had some pre-existing conditions. He had diabetes. He had diabetes.

Storms are coming. Trouble is coming. Suffering is coming. If you have the pre-existing condition of apathy, you're not going to make it through that. You're not going to survive. I see it, especially in young people, right now deconstruction is a really big buzzword. Everybody is deconstructing their faith because they got to this place where the storms came, and they didn't have anything to grab for. Just some stuff that others had taught them. They don't even know—is that real? “I'm not sure.” If you grow, if you suffer now, if you choose suffering, if you discipline yourself for godliness your roots grow deep. When the storms come, you withstand. You endure. That's work. It's hard. You suffer, but it is better.

Let me pray.

Father help us to choose what is better. Help us to choose what is better. Help us to be healthy disciples who pour and invest our lives into others. The things that we've been taught that we would teach to others. Help us to grow in knowledge, understanding, and application of your Word. That we would live on a healthy diet of your scriptures. Help us to exercise our faith, not to have it so that we don't use it, but to use it. To live by it. To make decisions based on it. To live it out. Help us to honor you with it, that we would be able to discern right from wrong, good from evil and live for your glory. In the name of Jesus, Amen.